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(110)

Lincoln: Man and American

By Stephen S. Wise

"The glory of Bossuet has become one of the religions of France. We recognize it, we proclaim it, we honor ourdaily a new tribute." May we not say that the glory of Lincoln has become one of the religions of America,—a religion of the American people? The glory of Lincoln, who was more than President, more than statesman, more than martyr, is our religion. If we do not worship him, it is not, as Carlyle says, that "men worship the shows of great men; the most disbelieve that there is any reality of great men to worship," but because he is almost too great for our homage and

too lofty for our praise. His glory is our religion. His mercy is a consecra-

tion of American life.

AINT Beuve has said.

It is well to emphasize every day, and more than ever at such a time as this, that Lincoln is a religion in our land, lest some of us imagine that the railroaddividend or the yield of the mine, or the harvest of the fields, or the output of the factory, or the cash-book of the warehouse, is our religion. In the temple of deathless fame his memory is enshrined. We do not know whether his bust has been chosen to adorn a niche in the Hall of Fame on the University Heights in New York; if not, it is because he is Fame. His tomb at Springfield is not less sacred and precious than the grave at Mt. Vernon, each a revered shrine of the American people, each a hallowed altar of humanity.

Vindication of the American Democracy,—we call this man of the people, simply sublime because sublimely simple. Let other nations boast of their achievements; we point to Lincoln, the man,—not unique, but uniquely American, matchless the world over, but completely, robustly, sincerely American.

No miracle was he who was the inevitable product of the American people. Far greater than the seeming miracle of his life would have been the failure of America to bring forth a man equal to its supreme trial. Not by virtue of accident rose Lincoln to the place of liberator of a race and saviour of a Nation. The mission came to the man because he was the man for the mission. The unutterable privilege of breaking the shackles from off the hands of millions of slaves had to come to Abraham Lincoln, because of the destiny of his character,—this man of rugged strength of character, uncompromising conscience, unspoiled simplicity of heart, blameless purity of soul, whose was "the greatness of real goodness and the goodness of real greatness."

Turning for a moment to a foreign estimate of Lincoln, which naturally is temperate and sober and in no sense perfervid, we find the French Democracy some years back casting a commemorative medal inscribed: "Lincoln,—honest man,—abolished slavery, re-established the Union, saved the Republic." "honest man" of the French characterization explains everything else. There is a direct and inevitable relation between "honest man" and all the rest. Great as were his achievements, the French people rightly felt that the man was even greater than his works. "Honest man" France names him; the negro race call him "Father Abraham,"—a title infinitely more to be desired than "Conqueror," which is the portion of an Alexander or a Napoleon.

We are often reminded, and not without justice, that there is nothing supremely great in American art or letters, that the contributions of America to the world's treasure-stores are all material, such as the cotton-gin and the steampress, the telegraph and steamboat, the telephone and harvester. If American letters have produced nothing superla-

tively great, we have something superlatively great to offer to history in the life of the founder of the Republic and in the life of him, who was the saviour of the Nation and the restorer of our National Union. We point to Lincoln, the man. Beecher apostrophizes him as Illinois' gift to the Nation. Lowell glorifies him as the new birth of our new soil,—the first American. Emerson sees that he is an heroic figure at the center of an heroic epoch. Wendell Phillips proudly hails him as the natural growth of democratic institutions. And Phillips Brooks honors him with a name above every other that he might have asked,this best and most American of all Americans.

Lincoln was the most American of Americans. It cannot truly be said that Lincoln was not a type. God help us if Lincoln be not a type, if it be true that he stands alone without fellows, without ancestors and without successors. ancestors were Cromwell and Hampdon, Hancock and Adams, Washington and Franklin. His ancestry was the Magna Charta and the Declaration of Independence. His forerunners were Garrison, John Brown, Theodore Parker. Lincoln himself was just and generous enough to say of his forerunners, the intrepid abolitionists, that their moral power had enabled him to do all.

Lincoln was chosen out of all the people,—the great American commoner, plain man of the people, as Emerson first styled him. To be the first man of a people in a land where every citizen is king is to be the manliest of men and the kingliest of kings,—king by divine right, by the divinest of rights,—the right of manhood and worth and character. Is it not the very Paladium of our liberty that the commoner, the homespun man, may rise to the highest station in the land? Is it not the inspiration of our youth and the pride of our manhood that the commoner, speaking for his kind, voiced the abiding truth: Government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth?

Lincoln the man is at one and the same time the vindication of the American Democracy and of the dignity and noble-

ness of the common people from whom he was sprung. He proved anew that the uncommonest men and women rise out of the ranks of the so-called common people. Sprung from the people, and trusting in the people, the people trusted and loved him. "They who trust us educate us." They alone distrust the people who are not worthy of a people's trust. Let not a man of the people who trusts and would serve them, who dares to speak of the duties of the strong and the rights of the weak, be derided as a demagogue. For Lincoln was a man of the people,—not a blatant demagogue, not a democrat on parade, but so democratic, so firmly trusting in the people that the immortal watchword which he gave to the Nation was the necessary expression of the fundamental democracy of faith and life of him "whose genuine love of the people no one could suspect of being either the cheap flattery of the demagogue or the abstract philanthropy of the philosopher." As one reviews the life of Lincoln, the prophet of Democracy, one is moved to say that no man has the right to call himself a democrat who distrusts the people, who is fearful of entrusting the people with plenary power, who is afraid that the popularrights movement has gone too far. Lincoln trusted the common people with less reason for faith in them than have we. We have every reason to trust the people, which moved him to place his trust in them, and one besides, Lincoln himself,—the common people incarnate in this type-man.

Democracy means not the eternal sounding of futile shibboleths, such as State rights,—too often an apology for a state of wrong,-but the application of fundamental political principles to the working out of the problems of American life and American welfare. Democracy is to be something more than the pose of a hungry office-hunting minority; it is to be the genuine conviction of a vast majority, not the slogan of a party, but the ideal of the whole Nation. We have seen within recent years that a man may safely trust the people and find the vindication of his own honest purpose in the loyal and enthusiastic support of the common people.

Lincoln fulfilled the ideal laid down in the holy writ for the governance of those who are to choose judges and rulers of the people: "Moreover, thou shalt choose out of all the people men of strength, such as fear God, men of truth, hating

their own gain."

"Men of strength" were the judges and rulers to be! He was a man of that moral strength which is the noblest courage,—strong enough to dare to be in the right and to do the right though he must needs stand alone. Let us not forget his strength, who was as strong as he was simple,—not only strong enough to carry on a mighty war to a triumphant close, but strong enough to oppose an unjust war, even though waged by his country. So strong was he that, refusing to be goaded on by his friends and unafraid of his foes, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation at the right hour, when it was destined to achieve the greatest good. Man of strength was he who, three days before his assassination, gave voice to the guiding rule of his life: "Important principles may and must be inflexible"; who, in his Cooper Union address, delivered himself of the almost prophetic burden, "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

Such as fear God! Fearless before man, Abraham Lincoln feared God. Lippiety was not of the substance of his religion, nor was he given to many professions of faith, but he walked in the fear of God. Not only was he a profoundly religious man, the content of whose life was rooted in religion, whose religion flowered in the beauty of the good and the true, but his was conscious faith in a supreme purpose. Almost might one say, in paraphrase of the word of Schiller, that the churches were not religious enough to command his allegiance. The question touching his day is not so much whether Lincoln was a churchman, but whether the churches of his time were Lincoln-like. Only to a God-fearing man could have come the inspiration with which he closed his Second Inaugural Address: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in." Such fear

of God is a nation's strength.

"Men of truth!" Scorning to tell a lie and lover of truth, this man who could not stoop to think or to speak a lie was little likely to act a lie or live a lie. Compromise and time-serving were strangers to his vocabulary. Nothing could be unfairer than to think of Lincoln, as is sometimes done, as if he had been a man of political cunning, lacking intellectual stability and moral courage. He was open-minded, but he was sturdily selfreliant; he was intellectually receptive, but always self-contained, even as he was a man of the people but never common. Schurz tells that in the first Springfield Legislature in which he sat, he recorded his protest against a pro-slavery resolution though followed by only one other man. So did he love truth and scorn a lie that when he was warned in advance against the consequences of his Springfield address, he silenced his timid friends with the unforgettable word, "It is true and I will deliver it as written."

"Hating their own gain!" Self-seeking was far from him and the quest after gain of any kind was unthinkable in this lover of his country. He was not a President with a conscience, but he was conscience incarnate. He hated the gain of the people's praise, even the gain of such popular good will as would bring about his re-election, unless such gain could be had without the sacrifice of selfrespect. He was a statesman who pleaded ever for truth and never for victory. He would have shared Lowell's scorn for the party which builds a platform as a bridge to victory, and not, one might add, as a refuge of truth. The people could not flatter him, politicians could not frighten him, riches could not purchase him, ambition could not unsteady him, power could not dazzle him, who served his conscience as his king, who "held his steadfast way like the sun across the firmament."

Rightly was it said of Lincoln that his was a character such as only freedom knows how to make. If our democracy become polluted by the taint of caste, it will produce no Abraham Lincolns. Lincoln fought not so much slavery as the things that made it possible,—the feudal spirit of caste of which negro slavery was only the most abhorrent symptom.

It was a noble prophecy of the people's tribune, George William Curtis, that the part assigned to this country in the good fight of man is the total overthrow of the spirit of caste. It is a far cry from the riotous opposition to the appearance of a coat-of-arms, in the late thirties of the last century, on the carriages of a rich New York family, to the title-hunting mothers and fathers of our own day, who prefer the purchase of any contemptible dukelet or paltry princeling to the best of men, who bears no prouder title than that of fellow-American of Abraham Lincoln.

We need not a new South, but a true South, a South that shall be true to itself, true to the Union and true to the principles of true democracy; a South that shall not have the name of Democracy upon its lips and despotism in its heart. One thing is certain,—that the way not to prepare the negro for citizenship is the way, in large part, of the South, which denies to the negro the right to complete education, which grants him little more than the shreds and scraps of a rudimentary education that is not worthy of the name. Unless Lincoln's work is to be done in vain, the South must not fix upon servitude without chains as the eternal portion of the negro

Lincoln has conferred a new dignity upon labor, but the new dignity of labor must include larger dignity and fuller life for the toiler. If it be true, as Lincoln has said, that to secure to each laborer the whole product of his labor, or as nearly as possible, is a worthy object of any good government, then children should cease to toil,—then Northern capital shall cease to enslave the children of the South,—then women must not be overworked and underpaid, and must not be driven into shame from shop and store and factory by a starvation wage, then man must have a larger and larger share of the fruits of his labor. If we are to do Lincoln's work, we must enfranchise all men, and first of all ourselves, into that glorious liberty of the sons of God which has been appointed to us, that we, the citizens of the American democracy, may be the emancipators of untold millions for all time.

Not very long ago I was invited to purchase a volume purporting to set forth the genealogy of Lincoln. price of the volume was to be ten dollars, -something more than the value of the house in which Lincoln was born. The descent of Lincoln is of very little importance by the side of the question,— How shall we avert a descent from Lin-What can we do in order to ascend to the heights on which he stood? The Lincoln commemoration from year to year will be of little value unless, in the spirit of the Gettysburg address, we make it tell by dedicating ourselves anew to the things for which he lived and died. The important thing today is not what we say of Lincoln but what Lincoln would say of us, if he were here in this hour and could note the drift and tendency in American life and American politics. Are we true to him, are we loval to his memory?

Lincoln is become for us the test of human worth, and we honor men in the measure in which they approach the absolute standard of Abraham Lincoln. Other men may resemble and approach him; he remains the standard whereby all other men are measured and appraised. Gibbon tells us that two hundred and fifty years after the death of Trajan, the Senate in calling out the customary acclamation on the accession of an Emperor, wished that he might surpass the felicity of Augustus and the virtue of Trajan. Melior Trajano,better than Trajan! Such a standard is Lincoln become to us, save that we dare not hope that any American may serve his country better than did Lincoln. However covetous of honor for our country we may be, we cherish no higher hope for the land we love than that the servants of the Republic in all time may rise to the stature of Abraham Lincoln.

In his lifetime Lincoln was maligned and traduced, but detraction during a man's lifetime affords no test of his life's value and offers no forecast of history's verdict. It would almost seem as if the glory of immortality were anticipated in the life of the great by detraction and denial while he lives. When a Lincoln-like man arises, let us recognize and fitly honor him. There could be no poorer

way of honoring the memory of Lincoln than to assume, as we sometimes do, that the race of Lincolns has perished from the earth, and that we shall not look upon his like again. One way to ensure the passing of the Lincolns is to assume that another Lincoln can never arise. Would we find Lincoln today, we must not seek him in the guise of a rail-splitter nor as a wielder of the axe of the backwoodsman, but as a mighty smiter of wrong in high places and low.

Edmund Burke once said that during the reign of the kings of Spain of the Austrian family, whenever they were at a loss in the Spanish Councils, it was common for their statesmen to say that they ought to consult the genius of Philip II. We dwell in times of great perplexity and are beset by far-reaching problems of social, industrial and political import. We shall not greatly err if upon every occasion we consult the genius of Abraham Lincoln. We shall not falter nor swerve from the path of national right-eousness if we live by the moral genius of the great American commoner.

The first word spoken after the death of Lincoln is truest and best,—the word of Secretary of War Stanton standing by the side of that scene of peace,—"Now he belongs to the ages." It was verdict and prophecy, for he is not America's, he is the world's; he belongs not to our age, but to the ages, and yet, though he belong to all time, and to all peoples, he is ours, for he was an American.



THE Senatorial sub-committee (Burrows of Michigan, chairman), has brought in a verdict in the Lorimer bribery case of "Not proven"; holding that the four men who confessed to being bribed ought not to be believed, and the three men who were accused of giving the bribes ought to be believed. Senator Frazier (Tennessee) dissents. And certainly the world will agree with him that it is to be regretted Senator Lorimer did not take the stand himself to deny the guilty knowledge with which he was charged. Nothing so becomes an innocent man as to fearlessly face his accusers and open himself to full investigation. The result is one more argument in favor of popular election of Senators—and indeed in favor of popular power generally. Legislators are not such superior people after all.

A NOTHER blow at legislators, legislatures and that easy, if not cheap, road to the United States Senate is the disgraceful intriguing, bullying and purchasing going on in New Jersey in the interest of "Jim" Smith and his machine to return him to the

Senate against the people's choice, James Martine. Governor-elect Woodrow Wilson boldly and ably champions the cause of the people—which lifts him into the list of those who will be acceptable to the Democratic-democrats as candidates for the Presidential nomination.

Oregon may well say "Blessed be Statement No. 1."

THE "Chicago Public" (every weekly issue of which has food for thought), contains an editorial correctly criticising President Taft's intimation that the Supreme Court of the United States makes the final law of the land. "The Public" goes on to show what every American citizen should know that the Supreme Court is only the head of one of the co-ordinate branches of the Government; that it has no power to

control either the Legislative or the Executive departments. Its decisions are binding on no one but the parties to the litigation and only the subserviency of Congress and Presidents (lawyers as a rule) has exalted the Supreme Court to a position of oligarchic power which is indeed dangerous.

CHIEF Justice White is an excellent lawyer, a profound judge and an able presiding officer. His dissenting opinion in the Income Tax case is most forcible, and will some day be regarded as the correct statement of the Constitutional point involved. From a personal point of view his appointment cannot be criticised. But that President Taft should violate a precedent every President since John Marshall's death, before whom the question has come, has battled to maintain, shows once more a certain light and airy character not to be suspected in one of his build.

It is strange that the soldier President, Grant, should have been so firm for this salutary precedent, and the judicial Presi-

dent Taft so thoughtless of it.

On the death of Chief Justice Chase, the friends of Justice Miller moved heaven and earth to have him promoted to the vacancy. Even the Attorney-General, whose advice in such matters is weighty (Judge George H. Williams, of Oregon) urged his old-time friend for the place. But President Grant

replied:

"No. I would like to appoint him, but this very pressure on me shows the wisdom of making firm the precedent that no member of the bench may hope for promotion, thus removing all intriguing from the bench itself. Were I to appoint Justice Miller, a wholesome precedent, it has taken generations to build up, will be shattered. Every member of the bench will feel the position is open to him and it will introduce politics and intrigue among the members of the Supreme bench, who should be free from all influences and dissensions. Whereas, if I am now firm it will probably become an unwritten part of our constitution too strong to be broken."

Judge Williams used to say that time and reflection had convinced him that Grant was right, and he (Williams), in his friendly and partisan fervor, had been less wise than the military President: and he used to cite this as an instance of Grant's common-sense and

firmness.

Valuable as Chief Justice White undoubtedly is, it may be well doubted that he is as valuable as the long established precedent now destroyed, (unless he is the only man fit for the position.)

THE bacillus Martis seems to be in the air, causing Nipponphobia with paroxysms of terror. The Secretaries of War and of the Navy unite in showing how helpless is the Pacific Coast to an invasion by the Japanese; so that it seems to me the Nippon-

ese will be the stupidest little gentlemen in the world if they do not hurry over here and take us while we are squalling for mercy. One warrior who, I understand, has seen service as a newspaper correspondent and gives his martial picture with all his decorations as a frontispiece, has written a book called the "Valor of Ignorance," conclusion of which I concluded it should be re-entitled the "Ignorance of Valor." He kindly points out not only the general strategy, but the landing points and bases of supplies; not only these, but the particular camps and routes of assault and positions of defence. The supine American is aided to grasp his fate by maps accurate in every detail. If I remember correctly Pullman, Washington, is the Japanese center of operations. God help them. (The Japanese). Not that I have anything against Pullman, but I am quite sure the Japanese general staff would seek to retreat after three days at Ah Fong's restaurant. Then would be our opportunity. If the invading Japanese army could be lured to Pullman and then all railroad rates suddenly raised, we would have them at our mercy, and my idea would be that air-ships could swoop down from Mt. Adams and drop plum puddings and other Christmas deadly weapons upon them. I dont offer this as the only possible plan. If once we got the hostile army at Pullman the American genius will rise to the occasion and devise ingenious means to keep them there. This whole Coast is filled with Japanese spies. Some are making observations, others pies. Some with infinite pains and stupidity are drawing headlands which they might buy on postal cards at two for five cents, but perhaps they are grafters and want to get a heavy expense allowance. One of the most dangerous of these spies, because the least to be suspected, is a boy about fourteen years of age who makes the furnace fire and chops kindlings for a friend of mine for recreation, and attends night school as a labor. It is terrible to look into that boy's apparently frightened and timid face and think of the treachery and slaughter he is meditating. He is a prince in disguise-and I will say this for him, that he is well disguised. His going to night school is only a pretence. He writes Japan-ese as well as I do. He really goes there to learn, from the conversation, what is the exact state of our National defences and he reports direct to the Emperor. He also has millions and millions in bank subject to his order, but he disguises this also—alas, and insists on wages, showing the perfidy and cunning of these Orientals.

But I forget; meanwhile we are leaving Pullman, Washington, the easy prey to the invading horde of barbarians. But will Pullman let them off so cheaply? Not, I take it, if Pullman is true to its historic name and remembers it is the upper berth of Liberty.

I can see the town marshal displaying his star and demanding what in hell they



Telephone Etiquette

Co-operation is the keynote of telephone success.

For good service there must be perfect co-operation between the party calling, the party called, and the trained operator who connects these two.

Suggestions for the use of the telephone may be found in the directory and are worthy of study, but the principles of telephone etiquette are found in everyday life.

One who is courteous face to face should also be courteous

when he bridges distance by means of the telephone wire.

He will not knock at the telephone door and run away, but will hold himself in readiness to speak as soon as the door is opened.

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